was carried out by CGWB in Plachimada village, Chittoor block, Palakkad district in Kerala and Kaladera village, Govindgarh block, Jaipur district in Rajasthan, where soft drink manufacturing factories are located. The main finding of the study is that agricultural pumpage is contributing the maximum for decline of ground water.

In Plachimada village of Kerala, ground water withdrawal for irrigation was found to be 92.6% of the total ground water withdrawal, whereas that for industry was 3.4%.

In Kaladera village of Rajasthan, the ground water withdrawal for irrigation was 81.28% and that for industry was 12.57% of the total ground water withdrawal.

Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) was constituted on 14th January, 1997 under Environment (Protection) Act of 1986 to regulate and control ground water management and development. The CGWA is regulating withdrawal of ground water by new industries/projects in over-exploited, critical and semi-critical areas. 'Water' being a State subject, action to impose fine or sanctions on withdrawal of ground water is taken by the respective States.

Educational loans for students

†*25. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have formulated a plan to provide Bank loans to students for studying abroad;

(b) if so, the rate of interest to be charged on this loan;

(c) the number of students who applied for this loan during the last two years;

(d) the number of applications approved along with the amount allocated; and

(e) the main reasons for rejecting applications?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The revised model Education Loan Scheme, 2004, circulated by Indian Banks'

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Association, aims at providing financial support from the Banking system to deserving/meritorious students for pursuing higher education in India and abroad.

(b) The interest rates have been deregulated and Banks are free to fix interest rates themselves with the approval of their Boards. Banks have been advised to fix their Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) after taking into account cost of funds, transaction cost, risk factor, margin and other overhead expenses. As per the revised model Education Loan Scheme, 2004 the Banks are to charge interest on education loan upto Rs. 4 lakh at BPLR and above Rs. 4 lakh at BPLR + 1 percent.

(c) and (d) The information on the number of applications received for education loan for studying abroad is not maintained separately by all the public sector Banks. However, the total loan outstanding by public sector Banks during the last two years is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

2005-05		2005-06		2006-07 (upto Dec. 2006)*	
Number Of accounts	Amount outstanding	Number of accounts	Amount outstanding	Number of accounts	Amount outstanding
468207	6713.16	679945	9951.49	897751	13424.12

*Information from 7 Banks is upto Sept. 2006.

(e) One of the main reasons for applications being rejected is that some of the courses for which candidates seek education loan are not recognized/affiliated to any university.

VRS in Public Sector Enterprises

*26. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
MS. MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of employees of CPSEs who have opted for VRS during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) which are the PSEs where VRS optees are maximum alongwith Ministry-wise details thereof;